

SPECIAL ISSUE

UMSEBENZI

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VOICE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

BEWARE THE TRAPS AHEAD!

The situation is full of promise for a major advance. But it is also full of traps. And the key question facing all of us is how to guide the advance without falling into the traps.

In general, there are two extreme positions which spell danger for the future of our struggle. The one is to maintain that nothing has really changed. This would close our minds to certain tactical readjustments needed to build on the victories already scored. The other is to exaggerate the meaning of the changes. This could lead to an abandonment or toning down of those aspects of our strategy which made those victories possible and which will lay the basis for the ultimate victory.

The need, therefore, to reflect on the relationship between our strategy and tactics in our developing situation has never been greater. It calls for both flexibility and adherence to principle.

It is plain that the regime's tactical approach has shifted. It is responding to mounting internal struggle and external pressure and its failure to contain and reverse the people's militancy. There is, however, no doubt that, in all essential respects, De Klerk's shift is designed to continue old policies by other means. **But merely to say this is not enough.** In order to assess the significance of the shift for our own tactical approaches, we need to go further.

Firstly, the fact that the regime is forced to change course creates certain new conditions of struggle which cannot be ignored. Events have already shown that the 'new means' have also opened **new space** for advance.

Secondly, we should not judge the effect of an enemy's initiatives solely by its intentions. History has shown over and over again that the objective results of an action often turn out to be the very opposite of what was intended.

In short, it is, above all, our responses which will play the key role in determining whether De Klerk's tactical readjustment will result in holding back or advancing our cause. We must undoubtedly make full use of whatever new space has opened up. But in doing so we must not be trapped into positions which will play into the regime's hands.

What are the main danger areas, and how do we avoid them?

- We must frustrate the regime's intention to trap us into substituting 'legal' protest politics for active resistance, defiance and armed challenge. These terrains of struggle must be pursued with mounting vigour; they must not be treated as alternatives.
- A new relationship is clearly beginning to emerge between legal and illegal work. But this should not tempt us to overlook the borderline between the two. **The style of our legal work must make it less easy for the regime to 'justify' going back to its previous positions. At the same time, we must use the space won and even expand it without burning our strategic boats.** Legal and illegal work are both separate and inter-connected terrains of



struggle. A clumsy collapse of the one into the other will do damage to both.

- As yet, De Klerk is doing little more than 'experimenting with new safety valves to take the steam out of the militancy which the old methods failed to dampen. We need to prepare ourselves organisationally to meet a possible backlash and resist being lulled into pure 'legalism'. **The consolidation and strengthening of the underground and the spread of grassroots people's organisation remains top priority.**
- We have never rejected the possibility of meaningful negotiation. But it is political suicide to spread the illusion that this could come about through anything short of intensified struggle and pressure on all fronts. A key tactic in the regime's attempts to demobilise our people is to present De Klerk as a leader who has both the will and the capacity, in the long run, to 'dismantle apartheid'. We must be on the alert to frustrate this deception in everything we say and do.
- The recent outstanding gains in the international arena, including the widespread acceptance of the ANC-sponsored negotiating concept, must be consolidated and expanded. In particular, we must actively thwart pressures from Pretoria's allies, and even isolated tendencies among some of our friends, which objectively encourage the idea of 'peace at any price'. It is, of course, important to counter the enemy-fed slanders that we are unreasonable and wild in the pursuit of our objectives. But in doing so we should not put at risk our standing among our people as militants and revolutionaries.

If a time ever arrives when the regime is ready to genuinely negotiate the process of moving to democracy as understood by the whole civilised world, it will come as a wonderful surprise. And if the preconditions for talks are met, a dialogue about the process may become possible. Until then there can be no retreat from our policy of mounting even greater pressures on all fronts of struggle, internal and external, legal and illegal.

There is nothing in the present situation which justifies a departure from the perspective of a seizure of power. We must skilfully use the new space which De Klerk has been forced to concede to advance this perspective.



- We stand four-square behind the immediate objectives of the National Democratic Revolution. This will bring about a multi-party, non-racist democracy based on one person one vote, a mixed economy and constitutional safeguards for the social, cultural, linguistic and religious rights of all individuals. The struggle to achieve this calls for the broadest coalition of all class and democratic forces who support these aims and who are not hostile to the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement. We must also be on our guard against the pseudo-revolutionaries who attempt to narrow the base of such a coalition. At the same time the working class and its political and mass organisations must maintain their independence and vigorously spread their ultimate perspective of socialism.

DE KLERK: CON-MAN OR LIBERAL?

Those who know De Klerk better than we do are not very encouraging. The writer Andre Brink, who knew him from his university days, dismisses him as a 'con-man'.

(*Newsweek*, 23rd October, 1989)

Wynand Malan, a co-leader of the Democratic Party, knows him and his track record in parliament. Malan is convinced that De Klerk 'believes in the apartheid framework and the racial confinements of politics'. He dismisses the idea that De Klerk is a liberal and says that he should not even 'be seen ... on the way to becoming one. (He) would try to manage the status quo although he would change some things in order to survive'.

(*Star* 26th October, 1989).

In one of his first statements as State President, De Klerk said that the door is open and we don't have to break it down. We all know what kind of country we still see when we look on the other side of this door. We see a country in which political power is the complete monopoly of the minority with white skins; a country ruled by emergencies, dotted with group areas, bantustans, with ninety eight percent of its resources and riches owned and controlled by a minority based on skin colour. Organisations remain banned, the media gagged and there is an unending assault on the trade union movement.

This is the door through which he wants us to walk. And we say to him loudly and clearly: 'No thank you'.

To buy time in the crisis-ridden situation in which he finds himself he has asked to be given five years. Whatever may have changed, it seems that the speech-writers of the racist leaders remain the same. In 1976 Vorster asked to be given six months. We waited in vain and what

we were given after the six months was greater terror and greater repression. In 1986 Botha promised to cross the Rubicon. This was followed by an even more intense phase of rule by the gun.

So we have heard it all before. And it has not taken long for De Klerk to spell out what we can expect at the end of his five years.

He has said more than once that **there will never be majority rule in our country.**



He has, over and over again, tied his flag to **group rights** which will give his small minority a permanent right to veto all fundamental change. And even at the end of his five-year period, all he is prepared to promise is that he will 'make progress on the scrapping of discrimination' (Speech at the OFS National Party Congress reported in the *Star* 23/10/89). He must really have contempt for the intelligence of our people if he believes that we will get excited by such 'generosity'.

At his Party's Transvaal Congress in the same week, he made another astonishing offer. He said that as long as the ANC committed itself to peaceful negotiation and **refrained**

from threatening a return to violence if talks broke down, it could participate in negotiation. He wants us to come to a table having abandoned one of the very weapons which forces him to talk of negotiations at all. And he expects us to permanently forswear the use of force even if we walk away from the table because he has offered nothing worth accepting. We can only dismiss this naive effrontery with laughter.

It seems crystal-clear that the Brinks and Malans who knew De Klerk, really knew him well. It seems too that so far he has not changed all that much. Perhaps a few more wounding blows from internal struggle and increased external isolation may force him to make a few more gestures in the direction of reform within the framework of apartheid. But equally he could bare his teeth in the same way as we witnessed with Vorster and Botha.

It seems very unlikely that De Klerk will really see sense unless the people make him see it as a result of a mounting offensive in all areas of struggle.



THE 'FINAL SOLUTION' GOES SOUR

The racists once boasted of the bantustan 'final solution'. Then, the grand strategy seemed to be in place, with well-paid and docile puppets, African armies and police forces ready to do and die for the master, and a population squashed under the jackboot. But, like a magician unable to control his spells, the regime today faces a severe crisis. From above and from below, the bantustan system is under attack.

This crisis is to be seen, above everything else, in the popular revolt in most of these areas. Mass demonstrations, strikes, bus boycotts and other actions are the order of the day. Democratic organisations are being set up or revived, in spite of what these administrations decree.

What also gives these uprisings their added significance is the impact they have had on the bantustan functionaries. In KaNgwane, Lebowa and Transkei, the caretakers are questioning the order of things. They seek to identify with the forces of democracy. Hundreds of chiefs are finding their place in democratic structures. In Bophuthatswana, patriotic soldiers rose up and temporarily removed the tyrant from power.

It is in this context that the signs of defiance within the bantustan administrations should be seen. As it unbends, apartheid capitalism's 'surplus population' is shaking from their slumber even those whom the regime sought to use as defenders of white domination. This is the understanding which should inform the tactics we employ, the basic guidelines being to place absolute trust in the masses.

At the same time, we must skilfully bring to the theatre of active struggle those forces which are shifting away from the regime. As the crisis of the system deepens, the regime's retreat will become more and more disorganised. Its actions in an attempt to defuse anti-apartheid pressure will throw its mass base and functionaries into confusion. Many will start to doubt the worth of it all. Those with a glint of patriotic feelings will more decisively move towards the broad liberation movement.

These developments have a direct bearing on the issue of political power. Our immediate objective should be to further weaken the regime's local organs of government. This will be achieved by means of decisive mass action combined with deliberate political work within enemy structures. We must ensure that fewer and fewer of the regime's employees obey Pretoria's orders.

To this end, we cannot afford to be rigid about alliances that could emerge out of this process. At one

level are those bantustan functionaries who identify and consult with the MDM. Such forces rightfully belong to the anti-apartheid coalition which is emerging out of struggle. At another level are those who have started to take some tentative steps. We should act jointly with such forces on those issues on which we agree, and win them over to the camp of democratic forces.



Funeral of King Sabata Dalindyebo

But we should guard against a number of possible errors:

- to base our approach on speeches and declarations which are not backed up by concrete action;
- to be so mistrustful as to underplay the potential for us to win over these forces;
- to concentrate all our energies on attempts to win over such elements at the expense of mass organisation and mobilisation; and
- to act in a manner that would endanger the possibilities created by the positive attitude and actions of some of these forces.

In each concrete case, we must weigh up the situation and work out concrete programmes: to intensify the all-round offensive and to broaden our ranks. In the final analysis, it is the liberation movement and the multitudes it leads who should determine the agenda.

IS THE TABLE READY?



Serious South African revolutionaries are not opposed to negotiating with the enemy.

They know that the struggle for freedom cannot be conducted in a pure way. They must be ready to use as many weapons as is necessary and be prepared to change from one form of struggle to another or change the emphasis in strategy and tactics.



There is growing pressure by international agencies and foreign governments for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. The African National Congress and the liberation alliance it leads has responded by presenting its proposals to the OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement. The proposals have been endorsed.

The Liberation Alliance is mindful that we are dealing with a treacherous enemy and its imperialist allies. Accordingly, we demand that the regime proves its good faith.

It must take measures to:

- Release all political prisoners unconditionally.
- Unban the ANC, SACP and other organisations.
- End the State of Emergency and repeal all laws which prevent political activity.
- Halt all political trials and executions.
- Remove the troops from the townships.

The proposals of the ANC say that 'these measures are necessary to ensure that the people themselves participate in the process of remaking their country'. We will not allow negotiations to take place above the heads of the masses.

The process of negotiations must involve the masses to ensure that power is indeed transferred to the people. The liberation Alliance has made significant advances in utilising negotiations as a site of struggle within the terrain of political mass work:

- Firstly, there has been, within the present limita-

tions, a democratic process of discussion leading up to the negotiation proposals. The organisations and leaders are united on this question.

- Secondly, we have occupied the high ground and the enemy has to respond to us. He has rejected our proposals and is so far unable to offer any meaningful alternative.
- Thirdly, as a consequence of numerous contacts with interest groups, there is a small but growing body of people within the white community that supports and agitates for a negotiated solution.
- Fourthly, many Western governments have come out in support of our proposals.

In response to the mounting pressure (internally and externally) the regime has released Comrade Walter Sisulu and his colleagues. It is an important move and we welcome it. However, it does not go far enough. Indeed, the release is significant in that it clearly reveals that the regime will give as little as possible and will try to keep as much as it can for itself, preserving its control and privileges.

What Role Should Negotiations Play in our Strategy and Tactics?

Armed struggle cannot be counterposed with dialogue, negotiations and justifiable compromise, as if they were mutually exclusive categories. Whether there is an armed seizure of power or negotiated settlement, what is indisputable to both is the development of the political and military forces of the struggle.

We are not engaged in a struggle whose objective is merely to generate sufficient pressure to bring the other side to the negotiation table. Our sights must be clearly set on the perspectives of a seizure of power. If negotiations become a reality, then we will take it in our stride.

In the complex relationship of negotiation as a site of struggle and the main thrust of our strategy and tactics, we must place the correct emphasis. An over-emphasis on negotiation presently will have the effect of diverting and demoralising our people. A weakened liberation movement and a demobilised people will not gain power. It does not matter how articulate or brilliant their negotiators are, power cannot be won at the negotiation table alone.

Indeed, as our Party Programme emphasises, the path to power lies with the masses in struggle.

POPULAR LEGALITY AND THE UNDERGROUND



The masses of our country have been steadily imposing their own popular legality on the ANC and the SACP. Now in the last two months this process of popular legalisation has been carried forward on a scale never before seen.

A few years ago someone was sentenced to a long prison sentence for having *Viva ANC* scratched on a tin mug. Now the time of popular legalisation of our liberation movement has grown so irresistible Vlok himself is forced to say in parliament: *'It is not against the law to display ANC flags in public'*. He must be choking on those words!

Our released leaders, Sisulu and Kathrada, Mbeki, Gwala and their colleagues speak openly and defiantly as ANC and, in some cases, as SACP members and leaders.



All of these developments raise important strategic and organisational questions. Should ANC and SACP machineries now surface from the underground? If not, what is the relationship between the underground machineries and the released internal ANC leadership core? Should existing MDM structures which stand four-square behind the ANC dissolve themselves into an above-board ANC? These and many more questions are on many lips.

It is important these questions are raised. It is important that, at the organisational level, we are prepared to adapt ourselves creatively and boldly to a rapidly-changing situation. But at the same time we must guard against hasty, ill-considered moves.

While debate and discussion must continue in an ongoing way, let us attempt to give answers for the present to some of these questions.



- It would be a grave error on the part of the ANC and SACP for our underground machineries to surface. The enemy has been forced to concede space, but our organisations remain legally banned. The present relative loosening up on repression by the regime is a tactic imposed upon them by internal and international factors. The regime still has the physical capacity to unleash a massive reign of terror against our forces. It might have to pay a high political price in doing this, but it has definitely not abandoned all thought of this option.
- We must use the present period to build and consolidate organisation at all levels — including the underground level. We need a tried and tested underground machinery beyond the reach of enemy repression, not only to prosecute our armed struggle, but in order to provide effective, day-to-day vanguard political guidance to our people.
- This does not mean that we relax in any way our efforts to impose ever greater popular legality on the ANC and SACP. We must keep widening the space we have opened up. We must make this popular legality irreversible.
- At present, inside our country, the ANC is two complementary things. It is a broad national liberation movement with millions of active followers and supporters among the MDM. At the same time, organisationally, it operates as a national democratic vanguard force with a disciplined, centrally-commanded cadreship.



Some of this internal cadreship, specifically the released national leadership, will now no longer be underground and anonymous. They have a major role to play in the ongoing, popular legalisation of the ANC and the Party. But it would be wrong at this point in time to dissolve MDM structures into an above-board ANC.

ANC and MDM structures have, for the moment, distinct but related tasks at home. The ANC's task is to provide overall revolutionary political leadership. The task of the MDM is to mobilise and organise the largest number of oppressed and democratic South Africans — as workers, youth, women etc — on a sectoral basis.



THE CITY CENTRE — A TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE

One of the major new elements in our struggle has been the wave of massive demonstrations in town and city centres. Hundreds of thousands have marched into major cities and into small dorps.

What is the value of these town centre marches? The regime, it is true, is trying now to transform our struggle into mere protest, into peaceful processions. It is also true that these town centre demonstrations must not become an excuse for ignoring the crucial organisational task of consolidating our townships as mass revolutionary bases.

But the short-term gains, and the enormous strategic long-term implications of these marches, must never be overlooked. Not for one minute!



In the first place, the marches have been practical demonstrations of the broadest, anti-apartheid unity. Young lions from the townships have marched shoulder to shoulder with white mayors. Apartheid has divided us into separate communities, but town centres present different possibilities. For instance, when white anti-conscription campaigners have marched through city centres in recent weeks, they have quickly felt the solidarity of black workers and shoppers. Everywhere, tens of thousands of formerly a-political people, black and white, have been mobilised together.

The marches have also been demonstrations of mass public support, not only for the ANC, but also

for the SACP. This support for our Party has sent deep shock-waves into the imperialist camp. Why? It has underlined that the revolutionary alliance between the ANC and the SACP is not based on manoeuvre and caucusing in some hidden leadership structure. For that very reason our alliance can never be undone by imperialist counter-manoeuvres and disinformation campaigns. **Our alliance is rooted in the masses themselves.**

Most important of all, these marches carry with them major long-term strategic implications. In Lenin's words: *'Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its ability, clarifies its mind, forges its will'*.

Since 1976 our people have collectively built up an enormous store of localised revolutionary knowledge. In every township of our country there are hundreds of seasoned fighters who are able to marshal mass power within their communities. The achievements of our last high point of struggle — 1985-86 — were built precisely on this great store of mass collective knowledge gained over ten years of struggle.

But the struggles of this past period suffered from one major strategic weakness. We were generally unable to carry our organised mass power **from** our township bases **into** the industrial, administrative and commercial nerve-centres of the regime. Our victories were localised.

Because they were localised, the enemy has often been able to hit our popular township demonstrations with extreme savagery, out of sight from the broader national and international public eye. We must never forget the many strategic advantages offered by town centre demonstrations. **There are a great**

number of historical examples, among them the mass city centre demonstrations in Iran in 1979, in which wave upon wave of such mass marches have led to the downfall of regimes.

Now in South Africa we need to learn collectively how to operate, not just within our township bases, but in the enemy's nerve centres themselves. This is not abstract knowledge. It can, in the end, only be learned in practice. And indeed, in the last weeks we have begun to learn how to assemble large masses of people in town centres.

We have begun to ask questions like: which marching routes have the most potential for drawing in bystanders and for putting the enemy off balance? Is there an adjoining industrial zone? How do we effectively discipline and marshal our forces for maximum effort?

In learning the answers to these and a thousand other questions we are beginning — just beginning — to address the question of how we use our organised mass power to defeat the regime where it really counts — there within its very citadel. In our mass demonstrations let our slogans now focus more clearly on the question of **power** itself.

But we must remember that these mass marches occupy a special place in our tactical armoury. They should avoid the kind of provocations which will make it easier for the regime to act against them.



THE PEOPLE HAVE OPENED YOUR PRISON DOORS

RALLY MESSAGE FROM JOE SLOVO, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Comrades,

On behalf of the South African Communist Party, on behalf of communists in the ranks of the working class, in the people's army, in the underground and in exile, on behalf of the thousands of SACP supporters here in this stadium today, we embrace you. We are overjoyed to welcome you back amongst our people.

Your great devotion, self-sacrifice and dedication have deeply inspired all of us over these long years. Since that fateful Rivonia raid you have been in our thoughts unendingly. Everything we have tried to do has been bound up with the desire to free you. We have always seen your liberty as inseparable from the liberation of our people and our country.

It is clear what hand has opened the prison door. It is not De Klerk's. It is not Thatcher's. The force that has liberated you is none other than the masses of our country — struggling shoulder to shoulder and supported by the worldwide anti-apartheid movement. Over the last months, in mass defiance in the streets of the towns and cities of our country, our people have been unbanning the ANC and the SACP.

It is with pride that we have seen our Party's red flag flying side by side with the black, green and gold of our national liberation movement. This symbol expresses the indestructibility of our historic alliance. It also expresses a growing desire by our working people to end not only oppression but also the exploitation of man by man. The achievement of a truly democratic South Africa remains the immediate aim shared by all of us. Such a South Africa will create conditions enabling our working people to work for a socialist future.

Comrades, as our released leaders assume their place once more in the active leadership of our revolutionary movement, history confronts us with the next crucial steps.

Let us ensure that De Klerk's tactical retreat is turned into a headlong flight. Let us ensure that the regime is unable to move back in good order to the next set of apartheid trenches. The situation demands an all-round intensification of struggle.

Above all, let us ensure that our victory, which is now ripening and within reach, does not turn out to be a hollow fruit. To this end we must ensure the ever more active mobilisation and political organisation of our country's working class. It is a class which, in its millions, stands in the forefront of the struggle for a unified, non-racial South Africa; a South Africa in which democracy will be brought about to its fullest extent.

The alliance of the working class with those on the land and all other patriotic forces will undoubtedly fulfil the finest collective aspirations of our whole nation. It is this unity expressed in the revolutionary alliance, headed by the ANC and embracing organised workers and the whole mass democratic movement, which will put an end to racism in all its forms.

Comrades, in the crucial months ahead we shall be greatly strengthened by the presence of our released leaders in our midst.

Together let us spare no effort in the struggle to release our comrade Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.

**Long Live the African National Congress! Long Live the SACP!
Long Live our Unbreakable Revolutionary Alliance! Victory is Certain!**



There can be no question of us unilaterally abandoning the armed struggle. Our duty is to intensify the struggle. We cannot relax on the basis of mere statements. We must concentrate on building mass organisations and working-class leadership in our struggle for freedom ... By eradicating apartheid, we will be contributing to peace at home and to world peace. We dedicate our lives to this.

Walter Sisulu



The ANC deplores the division of the country into compartments based on ethnic lines. The ANC advocates one country, one nation and one central government ... We need all the force at our command to dismantle apartheid.

Raymond Mhlaba



The African National Congress has always worked for unity and will continue to do so.

Wilton Mkwayi



You don't have to be a political scientist to see what the rulers are in fact aiming at. Stripped of all nice phrases, they are simply once again changing their language and style in order to perpetuate white domination ... We firmly believe that the fundamental human rights, including the language, religion and cultural heritage of all our people, will only be guaranteed by firmly entrenching individual human rights. *Ahmed Kathrada*



All proposals which do not accept the principle of one South Africa or those who seek a solution based on federal structures are sowing seeds of conflict ... (The) Alliance which was entered into by the ANC and the SACP is going to continue until apartheid, which is the source that seeks to destroy democracy in South Africa and spread its poisonous slime throughout the world, is eliminated... *Govan Mbeki*

EXTRACT FROM THE RALLY MESSAGE SENT BY PRESIDENT TAMBO

... Welcome back to active service within the collective leadership of the people's movement, the African National Congress.

As we held the fort within the National Executive Committee of your organisation and inside the command structures of Umkhonto we Sizwe, we valued immensely the comments, observations and suggestions you were able to communicate to us even while you were in prison.

Indeed, comrade leaders, we welcome you today also as a result of the committed and selfless efforts of Comrade Nelson Mandela, working quietly and energetically behind the scenes. This rally is also, in part, a tribute to that magnificent struggle by one of the longest-serving political prisoners.

Our country has arrived at a crossroad. Whatever road it follows, the destination will be, as surely as the sun rises in the East, the final and total destruction of the apartheid system.

We look forward to the day, which is not far off from now, when we shall re-join you within the country as servants of the people, to take further orders from these heroic masses as to what new tasks they give us to perform.

You, the leaders of our people, gave us a mission to go abroad, mobilise support for the struggle and return home to report to you on what we had done. Our mandate will not terminate until we have returned to give you that report, in person.

To the great masses of our people, so well represented at this rally today, we say: you know the tasks facing all of us better than anybody else. Continue to unite in action and to act in unity. Continue to be as resolute and fearless as you have been.

The apartheid system remains in place. We must make the final determined drive to abolish this crime against humanity and, like the sister people of Namibia, take the final steps to our liberation.

Compatriots, the future of our country is in our hands. At this historic moment, let us act together for freedom now. Our common victory is in sight. Revolutionary greetings to you all. **Amandla! Matla!**



I have no doubt that if it is necessary for me to go back to prison, I'll go tomorrow. I'm going to continue my political activity until we have achieved our goals. You and I have to liberate everybody. South Africa has not yet been liberated. *Andrew Mlangeni*



I would like to return to work. I'll be pleased to organise because I believe in getting close to the people. It's a great pleasure for me to see people still have confidence in me and the African National Congress. *Oscar Mpetha*



Women occupy an important place in the struggle as they mould the nation. *Elias Motsoaledi*



I still support ANC ideals fully. There is such enthusiasm in the country. It is experiencing its birth pangs. *Harry Gwala*

WE MUST NOT LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH

The behaviour of the enemy's armed forces is a critical variable in our struggle for power. It is an issue which needs more than lip service. We must address the vast potential that lies in undermining the loyalty of all troops, and winning over sections of them to the side of the struggle. Events of the past two years have shown that there is a developing crisis within the enemy's armed forces.



The mutiny within the Bophuthatswana Defence Force; the progressive actions of the Transkeian military leadership; rumblings of discontent within sections of the Venda armed forces; complaints over conditions of service amongst black policemen; the heroic protest action of Lieutenant Rockman supported by fellow 'Coloured' police officers; the public refusals of first 143, then 771 conscripts to serve in the SA Defence Force; and, on a less public note, an increasing lack of dedication

shown by part-time Citizen Force soldiers during their tours of duty in the townships — all of these are indications of the crisis of loyalty facing the enemy's generals.

Members of the armed forces are not isolated from the society they live in. These actions reflect the social and political pressures under which troops have been placed by their communities in a period of intense mass struggle. Clearly these pressures will continue to mount and the cracks in the enemy's ranks will continue to widen.

But we cannot sit back and passively watch history take its course. It is our responsibility to ensure that this fertile ground is exploited so that as the revolutionary situation intensifies we are prepared. We must be able to predict how the various sections of the enemy's forces are likely to behave and to know, with confidence, that significant numbers will side, in one way or another, with the masses. To achieve this requires an energetic two-pronged approach.

Firstly, there is a need for a co-ordinated political campaign waged by the MDM as well as our underground both to win over and neutralise the armed forces. This campaign needs to be purposefully

directed at the various distinct constituencies within the enemy's ranks. It needs to deal realistically with the material grievances of the troops, to understand the specific circumstances they find themselves in, and to include minimum demands as well as the general appeal for them to side with the masses in the struggle.

Secondly, and most importantly, we need to organise. We need to produce propaganda specific to its target audience. All this activity requires co-ordinated planning under the political leadership of the underground.

The primary targets in this struggle are clearly the black troops in both the military and police. **There are over 50 000 black South Africans under arms in service of the state and the revolutionary potential of these forces cannot be over-estimated.** It is time that, with the exception of particularly notorious collaborators, we cease to view them simply as enemies, but as potential allies. All efforts must be made to win them over, or at least to neutralise them.

Some sections of the white forces are also becoming receptive to our approaches. The increasingly successful anti-conscription campaign which is taking place outside of the SADF needs to be supplemented with organisational efforts within its ranks, particularly amongst the civilian soldiers of the Citizen Force.

For power to be effectively transferred to the masses, the apartheid armed forces will have to be dismantled. We cannot escape this reality. Objective factors will contribute to this process, but if we do not act in this field as a central site of struggle we will be leaving it to historical chance, beyond our control.



Lieutenant Gregory Rockman, right, leads a protest march of prison guards and policemen in Mitchell's Plain. All were later suspended.

LET US NOT SHOOT OURSELVES IN THE FOOT

Walter Sisulu made clear his attitude to armed struggle when he stated: *'An oppressed people cannot give up their protest or the sword in the hope that their demands will be granted'*.

Indeed, it is the armed struggle, combined with mass resistance, that has driven the regime into crisis. Umkhonto's actions have been a key factor in popularising the ANC and inspiring the oppressed.

At a time when De Klerk is allowing a greater measure of political expression, the argument is being raised that it is the armed struggle that prevents a further opening.

Let us clearly state that we reject this argument out of hand. Firstly, who can say how long De Klerk will permit such a state of affairs to continue? There is no way we can prematurely disarm the liberation struggle. This would be tantamount to 'shooting oneself in the foot'.

Secondly, all the basic reasons for the adoption of the armed struggle remain. We cannot risk facing the enemy without recourse to arms. Whatever sugar-coating De Klerk applies to the pill of white domination, apartheid remains an inherently violent system with the ever-present possibilities of unleashing massacres, and a reign of terror.

Thirdly, there can be no turning the clock back to a period of non-violent struggle when the gathering of revolutionary forces — a product of the momentum and sacrifice of decades of struggle — has brought the liberation movement to the threshold of seriously challenging for power. It is precisely at this point in time, with apartheid in tactical retreat, that we must give De Klerk and the system he heads no respite.



How is this to be achieved?

In our conditions a powerful revolutionary army can only be constructed on the foundation-stones of a powerful underground. The underground is best placed to recruit suitable activists for clandestine combat work.

The underground solves the problem of political leadership and command and control of the combat forces. The underground links the armed struggle to the mass struggle, popularises the skills of warfare among the masses, and prevents professional combatants from being isolated from the people.

The underground ensures that the armed struggle graduates from a low intensity level and helps open up the insurrectionary potential. Many of the problems in the way of developing the armed struggle, not the least being the absorbing of MK cadres trained abroad, can be solved only through the underground. Elevating the task of underground construction to an all-out priority will result in greater and swifter progress.

Linked with this is the necessity of developing self-defence units. Together with the underground combat forces (urban and rural) these make up the Revolutionary Army.

Conditions are becoming more favourable for the emergence of locally-based units which could be the fore-runner of a national people's militia.

The self-defence units which emerged in some areas in 1983-86 could be developed to defend popular organisations and individuals against vigilantes, protect people against rent evictions, engage in physical exercises, reconnaissance of the enemy, disciplined duty, etc.

In periods of revolutionary advance these units can develop ten-thousand fold, becoming the mass force around the core of MK combatants. Activists should already take the initiative to set up such structures taking care they fall under the political leadership of the movement. Without a Revolutionary Army of the masses the seizure of power or the transfer of real power through a negotiated settlement is not possible.

The building of the underground and the Revolutionary Army must go hand-in-hand with ongoing operations. These must give De Klerk no room to breathe, harass the enemy forces and undermine their morale, weaken the economy, punish the evil-doers, win over black soldiers and police, inspire the masses and demonstrate the effectiveness of armed action.

Our choice of targets must be based on our political objectives. On no account must we be seen to be targeting mere civilians of whatever race.

THE CONFERENCE FOR A DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

The defiant mass struggles of the past months have now created even more favourable conditions for building the broadest anti-apartheid coalition. The Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF) in December must mark another important step forward in this process.

But there have been debates and even tensions at times about whom to include in the coalition. These problems have often been caused by a failure to understand the nature of a broad anti-apartheid coalition. Such a broad coalition of necessity includes many different forces. Many will have their own separate agendas. **But what is essential is that they should all be united, not just in words, but actively in practice on a common anti-apartheid platform.**

The fundamental objective of the anti-apartheid coalition is to strengthen the democratic forces and to weaken the enemy to the maximum. This is done by:

- Mobilising the widest range of oppressed and democratic South Africans.
- Winning over from the regime a sizeable section of its own mass base.
- Deepening the divisions within the ruling class.

To realise these objectives, the front needs to be as broad as possible. Non-participation in government structures is an important but not decisive criterion. After all, we cannot ignore what has been happening before our very eyes in the last period.

White town councillors, mayors and parliamentarians have participated actively in legal and even illegal mass defiance campaigns and marches. Some bantustan leaders are now taking far-reaching practical steps to express their solidarity with the liberation movement. At such a time, the abstract likes and dislikes of certain small activist circles cannot be the basis for deciding which forces should be included in or excluded from the Conference for a Democratic Future. At the same time we, of course, have to draw a line when it comes to those demagogues who have no track record in the liberation struggle and who merely want to jump on to the band wagon for per-

sonal power gains.

A conference like the CDF can be an important focus and motivation for a broad coalition. But the anti-apartheid coalition is not a one-off event. It is a **process**. And, as a process, it may also have different characteristics at different times and in different places.

The building of a broad anti-apartheid front at a local level is often misunderstood. There is sometimes a tendency simply to copy what happened nationally. This does not mean that the only broad-front anti-apartheid task within a particular township or black campus is to echo the national arrangement. For instance, a formal alliance between a Sansco branch and half a dozen black consciousness student activists does not, in itself, make a very significant campus-level anti-apartheid coalition. A much more meaningful campus coalition should embrace Sansco, campus workers, teaching and administrative staff, sporting and cultural groups, and — yes — also the local BC activists.

Finally, it is essential that the CDF has a **mass character**. To be successful, it cannot simply be an agreement at the top between national executives. And here those formations with a real mass base (Cosatu and UDF affiliates in particular) have a special responsibility. They must act as a real leading force within the coalition. They must not just advance the specific interests of their members, but also act resolutely for the achievement of the common aims.

Above all, Cosatu and UDF affiliates must ensure that the objectives of the Conference for a Democratic Future are democratically debated and actively implemented right down through their ranks, to the smallest branch on the ground.

CDF'S SEVEN UNIFYING PERSPECTIVES

- One person, one vote in a united democratic country.
- The lifting of the State of Emergency.
- Unconditional release of all political prisoners.
- Unbanning of all political organisations.
- Freedom of association and expression.
- Press freedom.
- Living wage for all.



WHAT COMES FIRST — ORGANISATION OR STRUGGLE?



The question in the headline is a wrong question. And if we ask a wrong question we will get a wrong answer.

The right question is: **what is the relationship between the two?**

The past four years carry many important lessons on the relationship between organisation and struggle. During that period we learnt how to build organisation under the State of Emergency, how to build under state repression, how to consolidate, defend and advance under enemy fire. The September **Spring Offensive** was indeed a great feat for the democratic movement, a basis for consolidating and strengthening the underground and the mass structures.

The year started with our strength, organisation and capability weakened under the State of Emergency. But it did not succeed in muzzling the outburst. The **Spring Offensive** closed much of the debate on how to advance further. Militants were asking:

- Can we dare challenge the state with our present state of organisation?
- Can we dare mount and coordinate a countrywide defiance campaign?
- Under the State of Emergency and with our relatively weak organisation would such an act not be suicidal?

One of the big lessons of the State of Emergency is that the question of struggle must not be determined solely by organisation. Struggle must be the basis for building and strengthening organisation. In turn

the organisational gains lay the basis for advancing the struggle further. **This was timeously emphasised in an UMSEBENZI editorial (4th quarter 1988) and the events proved its correctness.**

The second lesson from the State of Emergency is to evaluate the enemy's strength not just by looking at the number of tanks facing us in the townships at any given moment. We must look at the dynamics of internal and external pressure on the political cohesion of the enemy.

- In the face of our own weakness the people took advantage of the regime's weakness — its crisis of legitimacy.
- Use was made of the regime's search for a breathing space from internal and external pressure.

This shows us that even under extreme repression, given proper judgement and analysis of the situation, we can still make tactical advances at a great cost to the enemy. Titus Mofolo (UDF NEC), in a *New Era* interview, said that in the period between 1984 and 1986 we were making advances and we were on the offensive. Thereafter we continued to make advances even though we were on the defensive. We laid the basis for future organisation, expansion and consolidation. Thus experience once again revealed the interconnection between struggle and organisation.

The past few weeks have been marked by dramatic events. Some of our key leaders have been released from the prisons. Elections

have taken place in Namibia. These were moments of excitement and anxiety, joy and hope, notwithstanding our awareness that racism is still very much in power.

What has been achieved in the recent period?

- We have imposed the popular legality of the ANC and SACP even though the legal status of both as banned organisations remains unchanged.
- We have gained a significant breathing space for organisational advance, despite the continuation of the State of Emergency.

The present atmosphere carries great potential for further organisation and consolidation, political mobilisation etc.

But we must remember that organisation and struggle must never be approached away from its strategic political objectives. It must not distract us from the main issue — seizure of political power.

The 1984 uprising saw, for the first time in our history, the emergence of people's organs of power. Popular organs of power emerged and addressed in their own way the question of political power. Organs of people's power understood that real power meant the destruction of the enemy's administrative and political organs and the creation of our own offensive and defensive capability.

At the moment this task remains in place. **The correct approach to the problem we posed in the beginning is: organisation through struggle and struggle through organisation!**

WHITE SOUTH AFRICA — NEW OPPORTUNITIES



Growing contradictions within the white community are daily emerging:

- A white police reservist joins a mass defiance campaign march in Johannesburg, waving a placard against police abuse.
- The ANC flag hangs from the mayoral balcony in Cape Town during a mass rally in protest against the police killings of anti-election demonstrators.
- The Conservative Party accuses the government of failing to enforce the law by allowing open support for the ANC and SACP. Vlok is forced to proclaim that the ANC flag is not banned!
- De Klerk and Viljoen contradict one another on whether the ANC must renounce violence before it can be part of negotiations.

The core of escalating resistance has been militant action by the organised working class, which has destabilised the system of super-profits apartheid used to guarantee. Growing mass resistance has been accompanied by intensified international isolation, with sanctions deepening apartheid's economic troubles.

Pretoria can no longer assure its constituency of a tranquil 'white' life of luxury. The turmoil of the struggle is no longer confined to the black townships, but is marching into the centres of all the major cities. White standards of living are declining and for the first time in many decades, white unemployment is assuming major proportions. The resulting confusion and division in white South Africa yield enormous opportunities for our revolutionary struggle.

We must win over growing numbers of whites to the side of democracy, draw whites into non-racial mass democratic organisations, the ANC, MK and the SACP, and build the broadest front of anti-apartheid forces. Popularising the Freedom Charter, the ANC Constitutional Guidelines and the Harare Declaration on negotiations will play an important role in this process.

White workers must be specially targeted. Experience shows that a growing number realise that the regime has dumped them and that they have more to gain by joining Cosatu unions than supporting the National Party. Those drawn to the Conservative Party, the AWB and the Wit Wolwe can be neutralised if shown that a return to Verwoerdian baaskap is simply no longer practically achievable.

White-owned big business has mainly sided with the regime against the oppressed, especially against the working class. But we must work to isolate the regime from that support. As our victory comes closer, big business will want to befriend the future government. Let them prove themselves now by cancelling military and police contracts, acting against the LRAA, recognising democratic trade unions and practically

supporting the campaigns of the Mass Democratic Movement. Continued organised resistance by workers, strategically directed MK attacks and industrial sabotage will convince them of the cost of bolstering apartheid.

Counter the Enemy's Distortions

Many whites still have fears about the future. They are daily fed with the regime's propaganda that we shall do unto them as they have done unto us.

Our stand was clearly described by Mandela when he told the court which sentenced him: *'All my life I have fought against white domination and I will equally dedicate myself to fight against black domination.'* He spoke as a leader of an organisation which not only preached this message of non-racialism but which always practised it.

The liberation movement's Constitutional Guidelines must be spread as widely as possible. They make absolutely clear that there will be constitutional safeguards to protect language, culture, political freedom, press freedom, judicial independence, and so on. But majority rule and group political rights are absolutely non-negotiable.

No one can doubt our position that those whites who are genuinely prepared to contribute their talents and skills will have a place in a post-apartheid society. And their reward will be commensurate with their contribution. But we have to remember that even at the expense of a degree of social dislocation a people's government will have to take affirmative action to provide skills and opportunities to those who, because of race alone, have been kept out of most of the managing echelons of the socio-economic structures.

We are convinced that the achievement of our political objectives will be in the best interests of all South Africans, black and white. We must, more than ever, get this across to a white community which is divided and confused.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF DE KLERK'S CONCESSIONS

One of the key reasons why the regime has had to make political concessions is because the economy could no longer underpin the existing political alignments. How has the economic situation helped to push De Klerk into these retreats?

The economic crisis has many faces. It has made it increasingly difficult for the rulers to guarantee the economic demands of its constituencies, whose demands differ and partly conflict. Let us look at some of these constituencies.

Foreign Capitalists and Foreign Governments

Since 1985 the most immediate economic problem facing the government has been the money South Africa owes to foreign banks. The debt forces the regime to run the economy at a rate which saves enough foreign exchange to meet payments. In 1985 the foreign banks negotiated agreements (covering 1986 to 1987, and then 1987 to 1990) to repay \$1.4 billion and agreed the terms on the remainder. The government said it could only achieve this by keeping economic growth below two percent per year.

That was bad enough, but a more severe crisis was on the horizon for the regime; its agreement with the bankers was due to end in 1990. In October 1989 the foreign banks gave the government at least 3½ extra years for repayment (and other options) after the old agreement expires in 1990.

That surprise agreement showed the political weight of two constituencies: foreign capitalists and foreign governments. The regime announced the release of Comrade Sisulu and our other leaders just before the agreement was reached, and **there is no doubt they felt the bankers would be more pliable if they made a political move of that type.**

The timing of the releases was clearly designed to prevent the October Commonwealth Conference calling for financial and other sanctions. The

power of foreign governments had been demonstrated over a number of years through the sanctions some have imposed. And these have caused serious problems for South African capitalists.

Afrikaans- and English-Speaking Capitalists in South Africa

They seek a growing economy where substantial profits can be made by investing capital and exploiting labour. But the debt crisis has closed that avenue. Any investment boom leads to imports of machinery which the regime cannot afford. It needs to conserve foreign exchange to meet its debt agreements. The new loans that would be needed to finance an investment boom are not on offer. And the problem is made worse by sanctions.

Many large capitalists also believe that the overall costs of apartheid are too high and impose a burden which prevents them making enough profits.

The overall effect of these problems is reflected in the slow growth of the South African economy. Output has been growing less than the population for several years and large capitalists feel none of the conditions are right for investments in new plant. They see the reform or even the ending of apartheid as a possible solution for them, but, of course, only if it protects 'free enterprise' from socialism. Their other solution, which the biggest monopolies are taking, is to transfer large parts of their wealth abroad which places further pressure on Pretoria.

White Workers and Farmers

These have always been the backbone of the National Party's support. They have also been hurt by the economy's weakness. Unemployment has risen among white workers, and white farmers, particularly Transvaal maize farmers, have been forced out of business. The living standards of these groups have been damaged by inflation running at over 15 percent for

several years and by the high interest rates the government is forced to maintain. The political effect has been to push some of them towards the Conservative Party, but the impact is, too, to break up the old coalition backing the regime.

What are the prospects for the future? The government's change of image is unlikely to improve the economy, so economic problems will continue to create political cracks which will be points of pressure for the people's struggle.

The sharp, immediate economic problems such as the debt crisis will not disappear; although the new agreement with the bankers gave the regime a breathing space, it has had to agree to a schedule of repayments. It will have to restrict economic growth to achieve this and, in any case, it will not be able easily to raise the new foreign finance South African capitalism needs.

In South Africa's case the crisis conditions which 'normal' capitalism generates are especially sharp because **profitability cannot be restored under the old system.** The normal methods which capitalists usually use to overcome crises are to restructure whole industries while holding down the value of wages and creating unemployment. But in South Africa if those ways out of economic stagnation are tried they further disrupt the delicate balance of constituencies on which the regime's power has been based.

So the economy puts tremendous continuing pressures on the regime to retreat further in the face of people's struggle. As apartheid weakens, the profitability of South African capital will also suffer and it is unlikely that foreign finance and investment will return to repeat the profits boom of apartheid's heyday. **One of the key factors in ensuring this is to press for international economic isolation with greater vigour than ever before.**

THE MARCH TO FREEDOM!



**ANC
LIVES!**

FREE AT LAST!
SACP HAILS SWAPO'S VICTORY!

